



County of Los Angeles
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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July 16, 2004

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
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Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

**MOTION TO SUPPORT AB 2222 (KORETZ) – PROHIBIT TEAK OR BODY SURFING
BEHIND MOTORIZED VESSELS (ITEM NO. 2, AGENDA OF JULY 20, 2004)**

Item No. 2 on the July 20, 2004 Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Knabe to send correspondence to the Los Angeles County Delegation of State Senators and Assemblymembers, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger urging support and early enactment of AB 2222 (Koretz).

AB 2222 would make it an infraction to operate, even at an idle, any watercraft with anyone bodysurfing behind the vessel or with anyone occupying or holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step, or swim ladder. This activity is sometimes known as "teak surfing" or "platform dragging." A person guilty of this infraction may be fined up to \$100, but this infraction is not reflected on their driving record. Exempted from this prohibition are individuals on the swim platform, swim deck, swim step, or swim ladder for a brief period or those engaged in law enforcement activities.

AB 2222 would also require that when a new or used boat is sold, a carbon monoxide poisoning warning sticker be placed within immediate view of the operator, and a second sticker must be placed facing outside the vessel on the transom or stern. Additionally, this bill would require all State-sponsored boating safety courses to incorporate information about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning at the stern of motorized vessels and how to prevent poisoning.

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According to the author, there is a trend of engaging in "teak surfing", "dragging", or bodysurfing while boating, which involves swimmers holding onto or releasing themselves from a motorized vessel and bodysurfing on the wake. This practice typically places the swimmer in proximity to the vessel's exhaust. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found that carbon monoxide (CO) accumulates in lethal concentrations behind ski boats, cabin cruisers, and personal watercraft. In an August 2, 2001 Safety Alert, the United States Coast Guard advised boaters not to "teak surf" due to fatalities from CO poisoning, stating that teak surfing placed the individual in a position directly exposed to CO in the engine's exhaust resulting in a loss of coherent responsiveness and even death. Since 1990, 93 deaths, nationally, are attributed to this cause.

According to the Fire Department, they support the intent of the bill to protect the public, however, their lifeguard personnel routinely work off a swim step of their rescue vessels as part of normal operations, and to affect rescues. When they are close to the shore or other obstacles, it would be dangerous to shut off the engine. **Therefore, the Fire Department recommends a support-and-amend position on the bill to exclude personnel who are engaged in marine rescues, life guard patrol operations or training, and we concur.** Support for AB 2222 is consistent with prior Board action on legislation to increase boater safety.

AB 2222 is in the Senate Appropriations Committee and is scheduled to be heard on July 19, 2004.

DEJ:GK
MAL:JF:ib

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Fire Department